

THE
COUNTRY ELECTION;
R
A F A R C E:
IN TWO ACTS.



L O N D O N :

Sold by S. HOOPER, near the New Church, in the Strand,
M DCC LXVIII.

COUNTRY ELECTION

A F A R C E



43.

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372



LONDON

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1854

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

<i>Sir Harry Simple.</i>	{ A shallow fellow, of small fortune, in love with Maria, candidate for the county of
<i>Artful.</i>	{ A popular hypocritical man, the other candidate, in opposition to Sir Harry.
<i>Trueman.</i>	{ A man of some fortune, in the inte- rest of Artful, in love with Maria.
<i>Mr. Wealthy.</i>	{ A man of great opulence, determin- ed to marry his daughter to none but a member of parliament.
<i>Crafty.</i>	{ Two false friends to Sir Harry, but
<i>Quirk.</i>	{ in his interest.
<i>Smut.</i>	A blacksmith.
<i>Blunt.</i>	A surly farmer.
<i>Landlord.</i>	
<i>Puritan.</i>	
<i>Countryman.</i>	

W O M E N.

<i>Mrs. Wealthy.</i>	Wife to Wealthy.
<i>Maria.</i>	The daughter in love with Trueman.
<i>Betty.</i>	The maid in the interest of Maria.
<i>Mrs. Blunt.</i>	Wife to Blunt.
<i>Wife to Puritan.</i>	

Waiters, Children, Mob, and Attendants.

The Representation of particular Scenes is submitted to
Mr. Hogarth's excellent Prints of an Election.

Dramatis Personae.

M. L. N.

A shallow fellow, of small fortune,
in love with Maria, candidate for
the crown of
A popular, practical man, the
other candidate, in opposition to
Sir Harry.
A man of some fortune, in the inte-
rest of Maria, in love with Maria.
A man of great opinion, determi-
ned to marry his daughter to none
but a member of parliament.
Two false friends to Sir Harry, but
in his interest.
A blacksmith.
A truly farmer.

Sir Harry
A.
T.
Mr. W.
C.
S.
J.
P.
P.
C.

WOMEN.

Mrs. W.
Maria, daughter in love with T.
Maria, engaged in the interest of Maria.
Mrs. B.
Mrs. P.

W., C., M., and M.

The representation of particular scenes is referred to
Mr. H., excellent points of an edition.

THE
COUNTRY ELECTION.

ACT. I. SCENE I.

A Room.

Enter MARIA and BETTY, meeting.

BETTY.

ORD, Miss Maria, not dressed yet!
—Why, there'll be a world of folks
here, presently,—especially as my
master has given it out that he in-
tends keeping open house till the
day of Election, in favour of Sir
Harry Simple.

MARIA.

Don't talk to me of dress, nor Sir Harry nei-
ther; I hate him;—I wish *he* had been fixed to
a stake, and burnt yesterday instead of his effigy.

BETTY.

O fie Miss, you should not wish such cruel
wishes as that.

MARIA.

Indeed I do. But prithee trouble me no more
about *him*; have you seen Mr. Trueman to-day?

BETTY.

Love, as the saying is, has given him wings:
I saw him fly by the house, once or twice, but

B

cou

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could not get to speak to him. He's purely busy, in Squire Artful's cause, not indeed out of any respect to him, but merely to oppose that goose Simple.—Well, I *do* think it a whimsical notion of my master, not to marry his daughter, but to one of those *yea-and-nay* creatures, called a Member of Parliament.

MARIA.

Marry, Betty!—Why, if he carries his Election, I won't have him.—I'd run to Scotland first;—a poor shallow-pated fop; so he may save himself both the trouble and expence.

BETTY.

So say I, Miss. To be sure, Mr. Trueman is a much more *properer* man, and, as we say in our country, *has* got some guts in his brains.

MARIA.

If it was not for my mamma, my pappa would be well enough, but, she's always dinging in his ears, family, places, interest, and such stuff. For my part, I don't see what interest she'd have, if all her relations were in parliament, unless it were to frank her nonsense into every part of the kingdom, which now she can't convey, without adding something to the revenue.

BETTY.

Why there would be something in that, and not the worse for us; for, the more she'd write, the less she'd talk. But—bless me; who comes yonder! If Mr. Trueman is not coming thro' the hall, in disguise, with some of the folks!

MARIA.

Is he indeed!—run, then, Betty, and take care, neither my pappa and mamma comes into the room while he is here.

BETTY.

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BETTY.

Make good use of your time, for, depend upon it, you can't be long together. [Exit.]

Enter TRUEMAN in Boots, disguised like a Countryman.

TRUEMAN, *looking about.*

Hist!—Maria,—are we alone?

MARIA.

I would not for the world, Mr. Trueman, any of the family should see you here; I should lead a weary life, if they did.

TRUEMAN.

It happens very fortunately for us, that your father now keeps open house, as I can slip in and out unperceived; I provided this dress on purpose, as in case we *should* be seen together, I may pass off undiscovered.

MARIA.

'Twas a good thought; but, tell me, how have you sped?

TRUEMAN.

As well as I could wish. I *do* believe the day's our own: Artful readily accepted of my services, and I have been indefatigable in his interest; up, night and day; you see my life, what *you* can spur me to. I shall think my labour well repaid, if but at last I call Maria, *mine*.

MARIA.

I make no doubt, but both my pappa and mamma may be brought to give their consent, if we can but upset this scheme of Simple's.

TRUEMAN.

Never doubt it. I'll try *my* best for it. I hav'n't been within a pair of sheets these six nights; no

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messenger,

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messenger, or mail-carrier, has rid at once more miles, with greater expedition than I, in canvassing this country for Votes. But, when Love dictates, its votaries must obey.

MARIA.

Indeed, Mr. Trueman, I am greatly obliged to you, and, heartily wish you may succeed.

TRUEMAN.

Pray heaven, we may! but, believe me, 'tis hot work. Simple, tho' a mere fool, seems to have plenty of money, which he makes fly, like wild fire, and, gold, Maria, in this, as well as in every other case, is the most prevailing argument a man can use. I could get no admittance any where, without first shewing my ticket. Indeed, Artful's tongue being so well oiled, saves him many a guinea: the women are all in his interest, and then, you know, the men, they follow of course.

MARIA.

If gaining the favour of the women, Mr. Trueman is necessary, he could not have a better friend, on this occasion than you.

TRUEMAN *bows*.

Gad so, your mother!

BETTY *without, loud*.

Miss Maria's in the next room, Ma'am, shall I call her?

Mrs. W. *without*.

No, no, I'll go to her.

Enter BETTY frightened, running before, and Mrs. WEALTHY in seeming haste, when she sees TRUEMAN, she stops short.

MARIA *to TRUEM.*

I am persuaded, Sir, your giving your vote to Sir Harry, will greatly oblige my father.

Mrs.

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Mrs. W.

Who is this man, daughter?

MARIA.

He tells me he belongs to the next parish, mamma, that he is a freeholder, and has influenced several neighbours in favour of Sir Harry.

TRUEM. *in a feigned voice.*

An I had twenty Votes, I'd gee um aal to he; if t'were only on Squoire Wealthy's account.

BETTY, *aside.*

Faith, leave him alone for a scheme! O, he's a charming man!

Mrs. W. confused.

My good neighbour, I beg your pardon,—I thought it had been some—Indeed, Sir, I thank you, and, when Mr. Wealthy sees you, he shall thank you too. I assure you, Sir Harry is a very fine gentleman, and more than that, is determined, if chose, right or wrong, *always* to vote against the court. [*Aside to Maria*] I tell him so, you know, tho' that would not be the way to swell our interest, and get a place for your cousin Tom. [*To Trueman.*] For the court—Well, go backward friend, into the saloon, (you will see many of your acquaintance there) and get something to refresh you, for you seem almost choaked with dust.

[*Exit Truem. looking at Maria.*]

MARIA, *aside.*

A lucky escape, indeed!

Mrs. W.

Come, girl, go get your cap on; at present, you are hardly fit to be seen, I expect Sir Harry here shortly. 'Twill be a charming thing, Maria, if he gets chose for the county, 'twill be the making

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making of us all. Your father shall have a place in the *Chequer*, for he loves to be counting of money; I'll be mistress of the robes, you shall be a woman of the bedchamber, and, as for cousin Tom, he shall be—What shall he be?—No matter, I'll think for *him* by-and-by.

BETTY.

And I, Madam; you have forgot me?

Mrs. W.

Behave but well, and you shall be—let me see—you shall be—sweeper of the Mall.

MARIA.

Ay, but mamma—

Mrs. W.

Come, away, away, don't stand talking, I have always told you one talker in a family's enough; go get yourself dressed. [*Exit Maria.*]

BETTY, *aside.*

And that she's determined shall be herself, for she'll let nobody hardly edge in a word.—Sweeper of the Mall! [*going.*]

Mrs. W.

Betty.

BETTY.

Ma'am.

Mrs. W.

Is the drawing room fit to receive company?

BETTY.

Yes, Ma'am.

Mrs. W.

Go, then, tell your master to make haste into the saloon to his guests, [*Betty going.*] and d'ye hear? [*returning*] tell John to hang the silver cistern up in the saloon, and let it run with port wine,

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wine, till the clock strikes four, [*going*] and—
stay—[*returning*] let me see—tell Will—are the
two ventilators fixed? I am sure we shall have
need of them, for the whole house smells now as
hot and frouzy as a beggar's bedchamber, with
these dirty fellows in it.—Hah? why don't you
answer me?

BETTY.

They are, Ma'am.

Mrs. W.

Well—then, you may go. [*Betty, going.*
But heark'ye, [*returning*] tell Will, I'd have him
wait above, [*going*] and — [*returning*] let that
new, sleepy fellow, with the scripture name there—

BETTY.

Hezekiah.

Mrs. W.

Ay, I don't know what you call him—tell *him*
to attend the door, keep both his eyes open, and
watch that nothing is taken out of the house, [*Bet-
ty going*] and—[*returning*] see that every thing is
as it should be. [*Exit.*

BETTY.

If every thing *was* as it should be, one would
think your tongue *should be* tired, but that's out
of the nature of things. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Village.*

*Enter ARTFUL booted, with a paper in his hand
(and Landlord) on his Canvass.*

ARTFUL.

I know not how Trueman is, but; egad, Land-
lord, *I* am almost worn out with riding: 'tis well
this is the last place.

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LANDLORD.

The folks say as how Maister Trueman was all about the neighbouring parishes the last week.

ARTF. *looking on his paper.*

Timothy Blunt,—farmer,—a wife,—three children, Sarah, Mary and Thomas.—What sort of a man is he?

LANDL.

A huge, furly hunk, but has a notable woman to's wife, as ever trod in shoe leather.

ARTF.

Well, I have had pretty good success hitherto. Who comes here?

LANDL.

Please your Worship's honour, Ned Smut, our blacksmith, he has a Vote, your honour, and will gee it you, your honour, as free as a'r'a man in the county.

ARTF. *examining his Paper.*

Edward Smut—Blacksmith! he is not upon my list;—this was a mistake.—Is he married?

LANDL.

Yea, along while, your honour.

Enter SMUT.

ARTF. *runs, takes him by the hands and kisses him.*]
My dear friend, Mr. Smut, it gives me great pleasure to see you, I was just going to your house; pray how does your good wife?

LANDL. *to SMUT.*

Squire Artful, Neighbour Smut.

SMUT.

Thank your honour, she is not main well, she has been mortally bad with an agur.

ARTF.

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ARTF.

Odd so, I am very sorry to hear it; I hope not long; I'll make it my business to go to see her—If I recollect right, you have children, Mr. Smut?

SMUT.

Yes, your honour, I am father of two, a boy, and a girl that can near run alone.

ARTF.

Is not your son's name Thomas?

SMUT.

No, your honour, Richard—and Susan, uncle and mother's names.

ARTF.

Ay, Ay,—Richard,—I meant Richard, tho' I said Thomas; I thought I remember'd 'em. [*aside*] Faith I'd like to have been out there. [*To Smut*] How does little Dick do? Sukey grows a great girl I suppose?—But, I'll call and see 'em very soon, I should have called before now, if this Election had not taken up my time.

SMUT.

I hope as how your honour will be chose, I have one vote at your service, an I had ten, they be the same.

ARTF. *squeezing his hand.*

My best friend, I thank you, and assure you, I take it extremely kind; make my compliments to your good wife, and tell her, I wish her better, and beg she will accept of that trifle [*giving money*] to buy her a little tea and sugar.

SMUT.

I humbly thank your honour.—Your servant,
Sir.

C

[*Exit.*
ARTF.]

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ARTF.

Mr. Smut, good day to you, [*calling out*] and pray let her know I'll certainly call and see her.—
[*aside*] Well, a crown has secured his vote: easy enough. How essential a quality is hypocrisy to a man upon his canvass! [*To Landlord*] a mighty honest man that Landlord!

LANDL.

Ay, your honour, as ever broke bread.

ARTF.

Now which is Farmer Blunt's?

LANDL.

That right against us.

ARTF. *aside.*

I had like to have forgotten my cue, [*slips a guinea into his mouth and knocks.*]

Enter Mrs. BLUNT.

ARTF.

Is Mr. Blunt within?

Mrs. B. to LANDLORD.

1. My husband, Mr. Bluffer, is just gone to your house,

ARTF.

Gad so;—you are Mrs. Blunt,—I protest I had almost forgot you, you are grown so florid in the face, [*kisses her, slipping the guinea from his mouth into hers, eyeing of Landlord*] My dear good woman, I hope I see you well. How does the little folks within?

Mrs. B. in confusion.

Lord, Sir,—a—thank your honour—pretty well
—a—you are so good!—a—pray—please to walk
in,

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in,—'tis but a dirty house, Sir,—but—a—do, Sir,
—I hope Madam's well?

ARTF.

I thank you, Mrs. Blunt, for your kind enquiry, she is very well, and, I assure you, wonders you don't come and see her.

Mrs. B.

I give you and Madam many thanks, Sir,—
[aside] Oh! he's a good gentleman!—People in our way of life have not much time to go abroad,—besides, Sir, to tell you the truth, my husband don't like I should.

ARTF.

Not like you should? Sure he does not pretend to controul you. I always look upon the women as goddesses, and think 'tis man's greatest happiness, when they are suffered to worship them.

Mrs. B.

Ay, Sir,—I would it were so,—but a—I would not say it,—'tis quite the contrary, Mr. Bluffer Here, and all [Landlord advances] the parish knows it, 'tis he's the god, and I am forced to obey him.

[weeps.]

LANDL.

'Tis so indeed, the more's the pity.

ARTF.

I'm sorry to hear it—I should think so pretty, so agreeable, so good a woman as Mrs. Blunt, would have power sufficient to melt his rigour, and mould him into what form she pleases.

Mrs. B.

Oh! dear Sir,—you are so good— [aside] Ay, he's fit for a Parliament Man!— [to Artf.] No,

C 2

Sir,

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Sir,—he moulds *me*, indeed, much oftener than I like.

ARTF.

Ha, ha, ha, but why do you let him?

[*Three Children run to the door, one runs to play with Landlord.*]

Oh, here are the little folks—How do you do, Tommy? how do you do my little dears? [*caressing the Children.*]

Mrs. B. to Children.

Where's your bow, Tom?—don't you see the gentleman, girls?—I hope your honour will excuse 'em, they forget their manners;—don't stare in the gentleman's face so, Tommy,—one would think you was bred on a common.

ARTF.

Let 'em have their way, I love to see 'em,—here my little man,—there my pretty maids [*giving 'em money*] go buy yourselves some cakes—fine, pretty children, indeed, Mrs. Blunt.

Mrs. B.

You are very good, Sir; [*to Child*.] say, thank your honour;—but do, Sir, walk in, I'm quite ashamed to see you stand at the door, I'll send for my husband immediately.

ARTF.

No, no, my good woman, you shan't trouble yourself; I have a house or two to call at, after which shall go back to my Landlord's, where I shall probably meet with him.

Mrs. B.

Well, Sir, use your own pleasure:—if he should come home before you get back, I'll send him to you.

ARTF.

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ARTF.

Do so; but—let me see, I presume you know Wednesday next is the day of Election, let me beg the favour of you to wear that favour [*giving one*] in honour of it.

Mrs. B. curtesying.

Ay, Sir, if all Parliament Members were like your honour, we should never have been plagued with the militia, nor the cyder bill neither. I heartily wish you success, Sir.

ARTF.

Thank you, Mrs. Blunt, good morning to you.

Mrs. B.

Your servant, Sir; your servant, Mr. Bluffer.

LANDL.

Your servant.

ARTF. to LANDL.

A very good sort of a woman; Blunt, you say, is a covetous surly fellow?

LANDL.

Yeas, your honour, the quite avarse of her.

[*Exeunt Artf. and Land.*]

Mrs. B.

He's a worthy gentleman!—but, a plague on't, I forgot to ask him to drink any thing; 'twas your faults ye brats;—go, get ye in, for what you're good for—Aye, this is something like a Parliament Man! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

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SCENE III. A Country Town.

Enter three of Sir Harry Simple's mob, with ribbands in their hats, sticks and beer in their hands.

ALL.

Sir Harry Simple for ever; Huzza.

1st MOB *half drunk.*

I say Sir Harry's an honourable gem'man, let who dare say to the contrary.

2^d MOB.

I'm sure I ought to think so, for I've had a main deal of his money; I'd go fifty mile an end to vote for 'en.

3^d MOB.

Ay, damn *Artful*; here's Sir Harry for ever, huzza. *[drinks.]*

ALL.

Huzza.

1st MOB.

Zounds, there's such good living here; I'll not go home one while again. Sir Harry Simple for ever I say, huzza. *[drinks.]*

2^d MOB.

Egad, Will, this *fever*, as you caal it, will make *Mall*, as foin as a *Dutchess*; here's Sir Harry for ever. *[drinks.]*

ALL.

Huzza.

3^d MOB.

So soon as ever he's chose, they hoist him on their shoulders you say, and sling money about, go-lore?—damn it, we shall have rare sport—huzza.

2^d MOB.

Zounekins,—*Mall* will be main vexed, if she does not come.

1st

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1st Mob, brandishing his stick and drinking.

This is rare stuff. Simple for ever I say, and the first man that contradicts it—I'll break his head,—damn me.

Enter ARTFUL's Mob, with favours in their hats, and sticks in their hands.

ARTF. *Mob all.*

Artful for ever. Huzza.

SIMP. *Mob all.*

Simple for ever. Huzza.

SIMP. *1st Mob.*

I say Sir Harry Simple's the best gem'man.

ARTF. *1st Mob.*

I say, you lie.

SIMP. *2d Mob, interfering.*

No quarrelling, no quarrelling; let both have fair play;—now, pray friend, tell us, why Squire Artful's a better man, than Sir Harry Simple?

ARTF. *1st Mob.*

Because—he is.—For experiment, he is not above speaking to us, but talks to any of us, as if, as how, we was his acquaintance.

ARTF. *2d Mob.*

He went to see my dame, and was so lovingly fond of her, as thoff she'd been madam: he squeezed her so close, and hugged her and kissed her, as thoff he would have eat her up. Sue was ready to die away in his arms for joy.

SIMP. *2d Mob.*

If that's the case, the Squire is a good gentleman.

SIMP.

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SIMP. 3d Mob.

Zounds, what argufies all his kissing and flobbering, will he take off the militia bill? Has he gee you any of his money?

ARTF. 2d Mob.

What's that to you whether he has, or nay?

SIMP. 3d Mob.

Then damn Artful, here's Simple for ever.

SIMP. Mob. all.

Huzza.

ARTF. Mob. all.

Knock 'em down.—Artful for ever, huzza.

[*They scuffle.*]

Enter Sir HARRY, CRAFTY, QUIRK, with Mob.

ARTF. Mob. all.

No thicksculs, no Simple's; Artful for ever, huzza.

Sir HARRY.

Here my lads, [*gives money to his Mob.*] break their heads, a parcel of scoundrels!

[*They fight, Artful's mob is beat off.*]

[*Exit Mob. hollowing.*]

'Fore Gad, nothing like a little gold to make one Beloved.

CRAFTY.

If gold will do, and, faith, I never knew it fail yet, we shall carry it, in spite of Artful's devilish hypocrisy.

QUIRK.

I never was fond of clandestine proceedings, —but,—however, of two evils, we are to choose the least; now, bribery alone, is *not* so bad as bribery and hypocrisy together.

Sir

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Sir HARRY.

Let Artful salve over the matter as he pleases; if he gives but a penny, he comes within the oath, as much as if he gave a pound.

QUIRK.

And, let him give it under what pretence he will, in *foro conscientiae*, 'tis bribery nevertheless; therefore we have this satisfaction, that if we are no *better* than other people, thank heaven and our own virtue, we are no *worse*.

Sir HARRY to CRAFTY.

Have you ordered the music and cleavers to meet us in Cocksheet-Hollow, on Wednesday morning, in time?

CRAFTY.

I have appointed them there by ten, lest Artful's party should parade it into town before us.

Sir HARRY, *warmly*.

Confound Artful and his party too. Double my numbers, Quirk, and not suffer the scoundrels to enter the town at all.

QUIRK.

No;—that won't do;—that won't do; were we to carry it under those circumstances, it would be deemed no election: they'd bring it into the house, and swear their voters could not poll, for fear of their lives.

Sir HARRY.

Well, gentlemen, I shall leave these matters wholly to you; I hope there is not much doubt of success?

CRAFTY.

Nothing is certain, but, by what I can see, we have as good as, if not better of it, than Artful.

D

QUIRK.

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QUIRK.

You must spare no expence; if you do, in my opinion, 'tis over with you. Artful's plea upon all occasions, is, *I'm no Courtier*, tho' 'twas but the other day I saw him following the breech of my Lord M'Sawney, into the great house at the bottom of St. James's Street.

Sir HARRY.

You should tell some devilish lie or another.—Can't you say that I'll get the militia bill and the beer act repealed? or,—tell 'em I'll get an act passed that every man shall be at liberty to leave his wife, at the expiration of three years, if he does not like her, and marry again.

CRAFTY.

Ha, ha, ha, I don't know what that indeed might do, but as to the militia bill, and the beer act, they'll now go no more down with the people, than stale small beer, to a man that is not thirsty.

Sir HARRY *apart*.

'Twill be confounded hard to lose it, after spending so much money!—Lose it!—I must not think of it.—If I do, I'm ruined.—I have been now obliged to borrow a considerable sum: However, if I get the girl, she has fortune enough to set all to rights again.

QUIRK *apart, to CRAFTY*.

Who shall touch him for the next five hundred? you or I?

CRAFTY *apart, to QUIRK*.

No matter which.—I will, you had the last. [*to Sir Harry.*] Why so thoughtful, Sir Harry? keep up your spirits man, or, we lose the cause.

Sir

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Sir HARRY.

I have been considering, gentlemen, how much I am obliged to you. What could I have done without you? *Should* I succeed, you shall not find me ungrateful.

QUIRK.

Should!—Let us not suppose a doubt.—Money must certainly carry it. The generality of freeholders, especially the lower sort, would not only sell their country, but, they'd part with their wives and children could they get any thing for 'em.

CRAFTY.

The great inconsistency of these people, often makes me smile: they sell themselves, and then wonder, and are displeased at being sold.

Sir HARRY.

Fore Gad! that's true enough. [*to Quirk.*] How have you done in the lower part of the county?

QUIRK.

Damn the lower part; I found 'em as mercenary and venal, as they could well be. Many of them turned up their noses at *five* pieces; I was obliged to give them ten, and, at one place, I was under a necessity of entertaining the girls with the humours of Mr. Punch; *that* cost me fifty; I should have done nothing if I had'nt; for the tongues of the men and women in that place are, like the strings of a fiddle equally tuned, in perfect unison. What one cries, the other answers.

Sir HARRY.

The women in some places have a wonderful attraction, ha, ha, ha. Have you Crafty, finished in the upper part?

D 2

CRAFTY.

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CRAFTY.

Not quite ; I have a parish or two to canvass yet ; indeed, I should not have been here, had'nt I got to the bottom of my purse.—I must have another five hundred.

Sir HARRY taking out a pocket book, and giving him a note.

Must you ! Blessings go with it, then ! Nothing venture they say, nothing have. A day or two now will determine all. My friend Wealthy has opened his house in my interest, and I have promised to attend him every day between this and Wednesday ; therefore you must excuse me ; I presume I shall see you some time to-morrow, you will find me either there or at the old place.

[*Exit.*

QUIRK.

Now we are alone, tell me, Crafty, how you succeeded last week.

CRAFTY.

I'll deal frankly with you ; for rogues are generally honest to one another.—I made a complete thousand.—I got a cool hundred out of one parish.

QUIRK.

Then you have done better than I, for what with presents, balls, feasting and puppet-shews, I hav'n't been able to save quite seven hundred ; and, when I gave him in the account, he thought I had been too profuse.

CRAFTY.

Zounds, man, you don't take the right step. Did you make the landlords of public houses your friends ? tip them but a piece or two extraordinary, and they'll give you a receipt for double the

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the money you spend. They daren't cry out for fear of betraying themselves.

QUIRK. A better man in this than you, Crafty.

All *that* I took care to do.

CRAFTY.

Did you enter in your account, so much to ringers, so much to fidlers, so much to tatlers?

QUIRK.

Tatlers? who are they?

CRAFTY.

Why, the old women.

QUIRK.

Indeed, I never thought of them.

CRAFTY.

Not see the old women! then you hav'n't done either Sir Harry, or yourself, justice.—It would not only have swelled the account, but tip an old woman's tongue with gold, and, she'll talk you off, in such gilded strains, as shall do you more essential service, than all you give besides. Oh!—the old women, the tatlers as I call them, have a power of talking you black or white, just as disposition leads 'em. Whatever you do,—secure the old women.

QUIRK.

Live and learn's an old proverb.—I presume you include the parson, and the apothecary, in the number of the old women.

CRAFTY.

Doubtless.—They are the belweathers of a parish, they are the main springs that set the female tongue a-going. Nothing in this point can ever be done, without the parson and the apothecary.

QUIRK.

24 THE COUNTRY ELECTION.

QUIRK.

'Tis impossible, Simple could have employed a better man in this business than you, Crafty; you seem perfectly acquainted with it, and can fall in with the taste of all ranks of people.—I'll be bold to say, you will eat, drink, lie, swear and whore, with any man in the three kingdoms.

CRAFTY.

Ha, ha, ha. Necessity has no law; there's no carrying the point without it. The better we keep up the spirit of the thing, the greater advantage we shall reap. I'd see Simple at the devil, before I'd take so much pains, if I hadn't a feeling in it. If he is returned, he marries the girl, her fortune is paid, and I hope we shall have some of the fingering it. If not, as we shall have the bonds he has given us ready in force, we'll execute the writs, and secure the money, while he has any to pay. [*Apeing Sir Harry.*] I have been considering, gentlemen, how much I am obliged to you.—Hah, Quirk?—but, come let's away, we'll defer our settling till the business is done. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *A Room in an Ale-house.*

Enter ARTFUL and LANDLORD.

ARTF.

I hope she'll send him back again, Landlord?

LANDL.

No fear, your honour,—I never knew her ge'an to falsifications in my born days.

ARTF.

Well, make us a bowl of your best punch; probably he may be here by that time. [*Exit Landlord*]

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 25

Landlord.] Never was I more at a loss in my life, than I am at present, how I shall heat this surly wretch: apply to him I must, as I am told he has great influence among his neighbours.—'Tis according as it hits!—I shall be heartily glad when this day's over.

Re-enter LANDLORD.

LANDL.

Measter Blunt's just come, your honour.

ARTF.

Oh, he is?—pray desire him to walk in,—and bring the liquor. [*Exit Landl.*] Now must I have all my wits about me.

Re-enter LANDLORD with a bowl of punch, and BLUNT.

ARTF. *running and squeezing Blunt by the hand.*] My dear friend, Mr. Blunt, I am heartily glad to see you.

BLUNT, *aside.*

Mayhap so; but, 'tis for his own ends I suppose.—Why hadn't he kissed me as he did my wife? [*to Artf.*] Your servant, Sir, What is your business with me?

ARTF.

As to business, Mr. Blunt,—we'll leave that alone, I never talk of business so abruptly.—Come, sit down and take a glass of punch.

BLUNT, *aside.*

I never am against that.

ARTF.

You have no objections to our Landlord's company, I hope?

BLUNT.

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BLUNT.

None at all; Bluffer's an *honest* fellow.

They all sit.

ARTF.—

Here's your good health, Mr. Blunt. [*drinks.*]

BLUNT.

Thank you, Sir—to yours. [*drinks.*]

ARTF.

Landlord, fill your glass, and drink to our good friend here.

LANDL.

Measter Blunt, my service to you. [*drinks.*]

BLUNT *shaking his head, aside.*

All this won't do. [*to Landl.*] Measter Bluffer, I thank you.

ARTF.

What's the best news Mr. Blunt, in this part of the country?

BLUNT.

News, quother!—This damn'd militia bill continues to make such confusion in this place, that I wish that man's tail had been on fire, that first proposed it.

ARTF.

I am very sorry you should entertain so bad an opinion.

BLUNT *interrupting him.*

Sorry!—bad an opinion!—pox on't—don't tell me that we're to maintain the brats of a parcel of lazy, idle scoundrels; that, at certain times, make it their business to loiter about the country, pilfering and stealing every thing they can lay their hands on. No, no, Mr. Artful.—Sir Harry Simple thinks as I do.

ARTF.

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 27

ARTF. You have three children, Mr. Whatever Sir Harry may *think*, I am convinced, the act has now been so long established, 'tis out of any man's power to alter it.

BLUNT.

And then there's your beer and cyder act;—add to that the exorbitant price of provisions—look about, look about, the poor are *starving* every where.

ARTF. I have no objection to any act for my

Starving! Mr. Blunt!

BLUNT, *aping* ARTF.

Starving! Mr. Blunt!—yes starving.—Would you have 'em eat horse-dung?

ARTF. I have no objection to any act for my

Bread seems to be the most material thing, and I cannot see how they can lower the price of that, without injuring the farmer. Rents are dear, taxes are high, and hands scarce.

LANDL. Mr. Blunt, that no money or interest will induce

Indeed they are. No one can tell where the shoe pinches so well as he that wears it. I hav'n't above ten acres, and yet I can feel it.

BLUNT.

Bread, neighbour Bluffer's the least on't; let 'em take the taxes off other articles, and then we shall see who's to fault; the Parliament or the farmer.

ARTF.

—Nothing would make me happier than to have it in my power, to be instrumental to the good of my countrymen. Give me leave to drink to your good families health. Landlord, here's Mrs. Blunt and her little ones. [*drinks.*] [*all drink.*]

E

You

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You have three mighty pretty children, Mr. Blunt.

BLUNT.
They are well enough,—they're as God made 'em.

LANDL.
You mentioned Sir Harry Simple, Measter Blunt, ha' you seen any thing o' en?

BLUNT.
Hav'n't you?—He came to ask me for my vote.

LANDL.
An' ha' you promis'd it him?

BLUNT.
May hap, I have,—and, mayhap, I hav'n't;—that's nothing to no body.

ARTF. to LANDL.
Mr. Blunt is right; a freeholder, in that respect, is a free man, and I have this opinion of Mr. Blunt, that no money or interest will induce him to give his vote from his friend.

BLUNT, *aside*.
But you're damnably mistaken.

ARTF. to BLUNT.
And I flatter myself, my good man, that I have always lived in such repute as to have the voice of every one in this place, and, among the rest, that of yours.

BLUNT, *aside*.
Adod!—That's flattery, with a vengeance!—

ARTF.
But come, my friend, drink t'other glass. [*helps him.*] Here's prosperity to this place!— [*they all drink.*]

BLUNT.

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BLUNT.
I don't know. . . . You called on my wife, she tells me.

ARTF.
About two hours ago, and was pleased to see her look so well.

BLUNT.
Yes!—

ARTF.
And I told her, Mrs. Artful takes it ill, she does not come and see her.

BLUNT, *aside*.

May hap so.— [to Artf.] Ay,—you was civil to her?—you say?—

ARTF.
I am always glad to see my friends.

BLUNT.
So I suppose. . . Didnt you kiss her?—

ARTF.
I *did* testify my joy in seeing her by a salute.

BLUNT.
Then you might have testified your joy (as you call it) in seeing me the same way.

ARTF.
Gad so, where were my thoughts. [*slips gold into his mouth, kisses Blunt, and slips it into his mouth.*] I assure you, my good friend, I am heartily glad to see you.

BLUNT.
Ay,—well— [*eyeing of Landlord, and conveying the guinea from his mouth into his pocket.*] Now you may testify your joy to my Breech, for to be plain with you, I have promised Sir Harry my vote and
E 2 interest,

30 THE COUNTRY ELECTION.

interest, and he has it, if I can crawl to town; so
Mr. Artful, your servant.

[Exit, laughing.]

ARTFUL amazed.

Unparalleled impudence!

LANDLORD.

Didn't I tell your honour, as how he was a surly chap?

ARTFUL.

Surly chap!—I never met with so much insolence in my life. I was very civil to him, why should he affront me? had he told me at first he was engaged, I shouldn't have been displeased; but, I'll think no more on't, it vexes me; be so good, Landlord, as to bring my horse to the door.

BLUNT.

Yeas, your honour. [Exit, Landlord.]

—ARTFUL.

A rascal!—I'd have horse-whipped him, if it hadn't been at this time. Drinks my liquor!—votes against me!—takes my money!—laughs in my face, and bids me kiss his breech! very frank indeed!—but as I often say, *He that plays at bowls, must expect some rubs.* [Exit.]

ARTFUL.

—well, where were my thoughts? [As he goes in, he looks at his pocket, and says, "I am heartily glad to see you."] I am heartily glad to see you.

END OF ACT I.

BLUNT.

—well, [Coming of Landlord, and carrying the wine from his mouth into his pocket.] Now you may testify your joy to my breech, for to be plain with you, I have promised Sir Harry my vote and interest.

ARTFUL.

ACT

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 34

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Parlour.

Enter BETTY.

BETTY.

The continual noise and hurry in this house, ever since my master has opened his doors, has almost made me distracted. There's nothing done but running backwards and forwards, all day long. I never saw so much eating and drinking in any house, since I've been a servant. Guttle, guttle, guttle; and then as to liquor, . . . in my mind, as fast as they pour it in, it runs out. . . I do believe John hasn't emptied our large pewter jordan less than *twenty* times this morning!— [*going out, meets Maria entering.*] A letter from Mr. Trueman, Miss. [*giving a letter.*]

MARIA.

Is any one waiting?

BETTY.

The man that brought it said, it did not require an answer.

MARIA *reads the Letter.*

'Tis only to tell me, he'll take the first opportunity of seeing me to-morrow, after the election is over.—I hope Simple will lose it, both for my sake, and the sake of this poor county; for such a representative he'd make, as was never seen before.

BETTY.

Pray fortune he may!—tho' he could say, aye—or—no;—as well as the best; and few of them ever say more.—Heaven's be praised, this is the last day! for I am sure the house has been topsy turvy for this week past.

MARIA.

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MARIA.

Where's my pappa?

BETTY.

Making a beast of himself, with the bears, in the great room.

MARIA.

I peeped in as I passed the door, but could hardly see any thing for smoke.—Has Sir Harry been here to-day?

BETTY.

I fancy not, or the whole neighbourhood must have known it, they'd have roared so loud.

MARIA.

Should he come and enquire for me, say I'm gone out, for I'm determined not to see the fool.

Three buzzas are heard behind.

BETTY, *stopping her ears.*

D'ye hear the brutes?—They're drinking now, confusion to the Scotch, or some such nonsense.

MARIA.

Let's get out of the hearing of it, for it lowers my spirits. *[Exit.*

Another hollow is heard.

BETTY.

Away, away, there's another storm. *[Exit.*

SCENE II. *opens, and discovers Mr. WEALTHY, and a number of Freeholders at a table, eating and drinking, a collation being spread, with pipes, &c.*

WEALTHY.

Pray gentleman be free.—There's a cold pastry; I have not tasted it, but believe 'tis very good.

The

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 33

The French Horns and Trumpets are blown while they eat.

Men talk to one another.

1st MAN.

Faith, Jan, my chops water at yon pudden.

2^d MAN.

An' I have a duced inclination to taste those red things.

1st MAN.

Do then . . . here. [*giving him a lobster.*]

2^d MAN, *tasting it.*

Zookers, 'tis rare good: I'll carry this whame to Nell. [*he slips it into his pocket, and reaches another.*]

[*Many slip different things into their pockets.*]

WEALTHY comes forward, and some of the Company.

WEALTHY.

Suppose we have a song?

ALL.

A song, a song.

[*A song here by Wealthy with a chorus.*]

Enter a Man with a parcel of favours.

WEALTHY.

Oh, here are the cockades.—Come, gentlemen, put them into your hats. Here, give me your hat. [*takes the 3^d man's hat, and fixes the ribband.*] there, Sir, [*putting it on his head.*] I enlist you under my friend Sir Harry Simple's banner.

3^d Man, half drunk, frightened and angry.

Hah?—Lift me!—No, by George— [*tearing the ribband out of his hat.*] —Not so fast.—I didn't come

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come here to be lifted.— [*aside.*] If that's the case, Sir Harry may go to the devil for me.—It cost me three pound the other day to get off the militia, and I shan't go for a soldier now.

WEALTHY.

Ha, ha, ha.—Sha,—you fool, what are you about? Put it in again—I don't enlist you for a soldier, only to follow Sir Harry, to-morrow morning in triumph.

3d MAN.

If that be all—I thought you mought have been going to list me in right earnest. [*aside.*] That would ha' been a pretty joke —

[*Some put their ribbands in their pockets and ask for more.*]

[*French horns and trumpets sound again.*]

[*The men retire to the table.*]

Enter Sir HARRY and QUIRK.

WEALTHY.

We have been impatient, Sir Harry, for your coming; you see how I have been labouring for you; if the rest of your friends work as hard, we shall make a pretty shew to-morrow morning.

QUIRK.

I hope we shall; but must confess you will exceed us all.

Sir HARRY.

Indeed, my good Sir, I am greatly indebted to you.

[*a stool is brought.*]

WEALTHY.

Help, Sir Harry to a glass of wine.

[*Servant helps him.*]

[*Sir Harry gets upon the stool.*]

ALL.

ALL.

Silence, silence.

Sir HARRY *bowing*.

Gentlemen, hem . . . Gentlemen,—I think myself greatly happy . . . honoured I would have said. Hem . . . I say, gentlemen, I think myself greatly honoured, in this numerous . . . numerous appearance of friends, in my interest. Though I'm a stranger in this county; that is, I mean, not born in it, for, to be sure, I have been often in all parts of it, tho' I'm a stranger, I beg leave to say, I have it as much at heart as any representative you ever had, [*aside*] and that God knows is very little, and will be bold to affirm, aver and declare, that if I am so happy, so highly honoured as to be chose, I'll do you as much service as I can . . . as I can. hem . . . and, be assured, gentlemen, that while I have life and spirits, I will oppose every thing in the House, that every individual shall dislike, your cause, shall be my cause, your prosperity, my prosperity. [*Bows. All clap their hands.*] Give me leave, then to drink to your good healths. Gentlemen, I have the honour to drink prosperity to you all, and this county in particular. [*drinks.*]

Sir HARRY, WEALTHY, and QUIRK.

Huzza,—huzza,—huzza.

[*Sir Harry gets down.*]

WEALTHY.

I can assure you, Sir Harry, every man here is as much your friend, as I am. Come, gentlemen, let us fill a bumper to our worthy friend. [*All fill their glasses, horns and trumpets sound.*] Sir Harry Simple for ever.

ALL.

Sir Harry Simple for ever [*all drink!*] Huzza.

[*Sir Harry bowing.*]

MAST

F

WEAL-

WEALTHY.

Again.

ALL.

Huzza.

[*Sir Harry bowing.*]

WEALTHY.

Once more.

ALL.

Huzza.

[*Sir Harry bowing.*]WEALTHY *hollows by himself.*

Huzza. I wish, with all my soul, I was a few years younger, I'd drink and hollow till to-morrow this time.

QUIRK.

You do excellently well as 'tis.

WEALTHY.

If it's agreeable to you, Sir Harry, we'll adjourn. [*to the company*] Pray, gentlemen, be free; I'll be with you again shortly.

Exeunt Wealthy, Quirk, and Sir Harry bowing.

ALL the remaining company.

Huzza.

[*Scene shuts all in.*]

SCENE III.

*A Lobby in ARTFUL's House.**Enter ARTFUL and TRUEMAN talking.*

TRUEM.

Blunt by name,—Blunt by nature!—I never heard of so much impudence before!—Sure there must be something infatuating in the House of Commons, or gentlemen, would not take so much pains, and degrade themselves as they do, to obtain a seat there.

ARTF.

You shall know the sweets of it, when once 'tis in my power to inform you.

TRUEM.

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TRUEM.

Sooner than I'd take this trouble for myself, I'd forego the honour of sitting there to all eternity:

[*musings*.

ARTF.

Then, Trueman, I'm the more obliged to you,

TRUEM.

Honour did I call it?—It *was* an honour once, when honesty and patriotism were the reigning principles; but, *now*, since venality has found a way into the breast, and tainted that integrity our fathers gloried in,—Honour is become a phantom, and patriotism little better than a shadow.

ARTF.

Let us not despair, but hope to see those days again. You're glad, I presume your work is done?

TRUEM.

In very truth, I am. None but he who has experienced it, can tell the fatigue and trouble that attends it.—Up night and day for weeks together, fawning on, kissing and flattering the women all day, smoking, boozing, and licking the very spit-tle of the men, all night.

ARTF.

'Twould be well enough at particular times, and with particular persons, but, to be obliged to do it with all ranks and degrees of people, and so long together; Taylors, Barbers, Shoemakers, Tinkers and Blacksmiths; and to be forced to be obsequious to those, whom you hate the sight of. . . . Faith, Trueman, I'm ashamed of it.—

TRUEM.

The times, my friend, the times are such,—there's no getting into the house without it?

ARTF.

What's the place of our rendezvous?

F 2

TRUEM.

TRUEM.

Ivy Common. As we're to be upon the hustings by twelve, 'tis necessary we should repair thither immediately, for the clock has struck nine.

ARTF.

I received a card yesterday from the mayor (no doubt Simple had the same) desiring us to enter into town on foot, lest any accident should happen from the hories.

TRUEM.

No bad precaution that, I thought of it myself.

ARTF.—

Are there houses enough of entertainment open?

TRUEM.

That we might err on the right side, I have just opened the Bell. I ought to have done it sooner, for it has put the landlord into a confounded bustle. How did you succeed in your canvals, with the clergy?

ARTF.

They, at present, declare themselves neuter, however, I doubt not but at dinner time, I shall have the greatest shew of them, for I have sent in a pair of bucks, and have ordered my table to be served with French wines; whereas, I hear Sir Harry's is served up cold.

TRUEM.

There's many at the Bull I'm told, already; finking one another with tobacco, even before dinner. They're in reserve, I presume, in case of tight work.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

There's a number of gentlemen on horseback at the door, waiting your coming, Sir.

ARTF.

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 39

ACT II.

Well,—bring our horses to the fore-gate. [*Exit servant.*] Now to the field. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Street, in the County Town.
A number of signs are seen with boards hanging to the bottom of them, on some is written ARTFUL, on some SIMPLE, intimating, in whose interest each house is open.
Various people cross the stage, some sick, some lame, some blind, going as to the poll, among these is a Puritan accompanied by his wife, and two Emisseries of different parties distributing bills, &c.

1st EM. to PURITAN.

Who do you vote for, friend?

PURITAN.

My conscience bids me poll for the Squire, but my wife says, I mustn't. . . I don't know what to do.

1st EMIS.

For Sir Harry, to be sure . . . If you'd do your country any service, give your vote to Sir Harry. He expects you to dinner at the George . . . Here's a bill of the house. [*offers a bill, with money in it.*]

PURIT.

I never takes no bribes; . . . my conscience won't let me.

WIFE to PURIT.

Plague o' your conscience!—so much fuss about a trumpery thing!—Will conscience buy you a dinner? take it, there's gold in it.

PURIT.

So much the worse, wife, so much the worse . . . Satan wrapt up in it!—avaunt, tempter, avaunt.—

1st EMIS.

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1st EMISS.

You should gild your conscience as the doctors do their pills, to make 'em go down.

WIFE.

Take it I say, Will, this minute, or—you shall never hear the last on't . . . [*to 1st Emiss.*] you are very good, Sir, I'll take it for'n, and make him vote for Sir Harry [*takes the money.*] [*to her husband.*] You foolish blockhead,—you refus'd it so often, I thought we should ha' lost it.—Now, you may vote according to your Conscience.

PURIT.

Mind wife, it was not I that took it, it was not I that took it. [*Exit Puritan and wife.*]

Enter a man half drunk, brandishing a stick, his face scarred, having been in a scuffle; crossing the stage he meets a waiter with a cloth under his arm.

WAITER.

Shall I shew you to the Crown and thistle;

MAN.

Pox o' your Crown and thistle; . . . I'm not for the court. . . Liberty and property for ever! —Damme. [*Exit with waiter.*]

Enter a country fellow, whistling. He is met by the two Emissaries.

2d EMISS.

Your vote is desired for Squire Artful, and your company requested at the Bell. [*giving a paper.*]

1st EMISS.

The George is the best house;—your friends are at the George. . . [*giving a paper.*]

COUNTRYM.

—Which of you two, am I to believe?

2d EMISS.

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 41

2d EMIS.

Whose interest are you in?

COUNTRYM.

My own.

1st EMIS.

Well said, countryman; then you'll dine with Sir Harry; every man that studies his own interest, gives his vote to Sir Harry.

[slipping money into his hand.]

COUNTRYM.

I ar'n't rightfure of that. Where's the best living?

2d EMIS. to COUNTRYM.

At the Bell, besides, *[whispering.]* Sir Harry's a courtier;—the Squire is not.

[putting a piece into his hand.]

[Countryman holds fast the money, eyeing them both.]

[both whisper the countryman as he goes out.]

1st EMIS. *whispering.*

Sir Harry will give you a guinea every child you have.

2d EMIS. ditto.

The Squire will stand for 'em.

1st EMIS. ditto.

He'll lower the taxes.

2d EMIS. ditto.

He hates the Scotch.

[Exeunt.]

Noise without.

Enter a procession of Sir HARRY's Party. Headed by Sir HARRY, WEALTHY, CRAFTY, and QUIRK, and several gentlemen richly dressed, with mob, colours, music, marrowbones and cleavers. Sir HARRY bowing to all.

MOB all.

Sir Harry for ever, Sir Harry Simple for ever, huzza, huzza.

[Music plays.]

CRAFTY.

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CRATTY.

Pray, gentlemen, make way there.

M O B, all.

Sir Harry for ever, huzza.

[Music plays, the procession goes off.

1st M O B.

Wouns, he's main foinly dressed;

2d M O B.

Did you oblarve, Jah; how mannerly he was?

[Bowing awkwardly.

3d M O B.

Yeas, most tediously so; I warnt you he took us all for his friends.

1st M O B.

'Tis aal pocrify, like our farmers, when landlord comes, they're cap in hand; but as soon as his back is turned, he may go to the devil for what they care.

[bellowing, without.

2d M O B.

Stand out of the way, — here comes the Squoire's party.

Enter ARTFUL's party, in procession, with colours, music, &c. ARTFUL, TRUEMAN, and several gentlemen at the head, finely dressed. ARTFUL, bowing to all.

M O B, all.

No Simple's, no Simple's, Artful for ever, huzza, huzza.

TRUEMAN.

By your leave, gentlemen.

M O B, all.

Liberty, property, and no excise! — Huzza!

Music play, procession goes off.

[Enter

THE COUNTRY ELECTION. 43

Enter a waiter calling another in the crowd.

1st WAITER.

Nicodemus!—Nicode—mus!

2^d WAITER.

Here, here—

1st WAITER, *loud*.

More rum and tobacco for the clergy.—

2^d WAITER.

Coming, com-ing. [Exeunt all,

SCENE V.

A Room in WEALTHY'S House.

Enter Mrs. WEALTHY.

Mrs. W.

I'm all upon the fidgets to know how this matter goes; Mr. Wealthy had my particular orders to dispatch a messenger every ten minutes. Betty—
[calls] why, Betty.—

Enter BETTY.

BETTY, *aside*.

Lord, how quiet the house is, since those bears have left it; I can hardly here my *Mistress* now.

Mrs. W.

Betty.

BETTY.

Madam.

Mrs. W.

Is there no express arriv'd?—No account from the hustings?

BETTY.

None that I know of, Ma'am.—I hear Sir Harry will lose it.

G

Mrs.

44 THE COUNTRY ELECTION.

Mrs. W.

Peace baggage;—better *you* lose your tongue first.

BETTY.

A neighbour passed the door this instant, and told me squire Artful had it five to three.

Mrs. W.

'Tis impossible, varlet.—And, yet I fear there's something in it, as no body's been here.

BETTY.

Oh, 'tis certainly so.

Mrs. W.

Run to the door, and see if any one's coming.

BETTY.

Mercy, how still the house is! I hardly know where I am.

[Exit Betty.]

Enter MARIA.

Mrs. W.

Maria, is it not very unaccountable that your father should send no kind of word?

MARIA.

Perhaps it goes hard against Sir Harry, and my Papa waits till the poll takes a better turn.

Mrs. W.

Tell me not of *better* or *worse*; I believe in my heart, if he does not carry it I shall go distracted.

MARIA.

I'm sorry, mamma, to see you so much concerned about it; what advantage will it be to you if he is returned?

Mrs. W.

How can you ask that nonsensical question?—Will it be no advantage to have the disposal of many

many places about the Court? Will it be no advantage to be importuned for our interest? Will it be no advantage to have one's daughter the wife of a member of parliament?—

MARIA.

Mamma, you quite astonish me; do you think. . . .

Mrs. W.

If he does not gain it, I'll have nothing to say to him;—you shan't have him, let Mr. Wealthy say what he will.

MARIA.

With respect to that, you may be perfectly easy; for I would not be the wife of so illiterate a fop, was he possessed of the first seat in the House of Lords.

Mrs. W.

You're thinking of that low bred fellow, Trueman, now.

MARIA.

Mr. Trueman is a gentleman, a man of some honour, and had *he* stood for the county, would have carried it in spite of fate, but Sir Harry is such an ignorant coxcomb, that had he spent ten times the sum he has, I'm persuaded it must have been to little purpose. . . I fear you have only disgraced yourselves in espousing *his* cause.

Mrs. W.

Girl cease your impertinence.

MARIA.

If you and my pappa are determined your son-in-law shall be a knight of the shire, you need only consent to my marriage with Mr. Trueman, support him as heartily as you have done Sir Harry, and I'll be bound you'll succeed.

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Mrs. W.

How's that, Maria? *[listening greedily.]*

MARIA.

I say, mamma; as I am an only child, and my pappa does not want for money, let him consent to my marrying Mr. Trueman, put him up for the county the next vacancy; support him as he has done Sir Harry, and there's no doubt he'll carry it; for in his canvass for Mr. Artful, he has won the hearts of all the people.

Mrs. W. *aside.*

She talks a little reasonable.—But it must not be. . . . Sir Harry cannot lose it. . . . Run to the upper windows, and see if any of our fellows are coming. That wench stays an age, I'll go out into the road myself.

MARIA.

Good fortune be my friend, and I may be blessed at last!— *[Exit.]*

SCENE VI.

Opens and discovers a street crowded.

Windows full of ladies, holding out their handkerchiefs; Artful hoisted. Bells heard ringing; colours flying, music playing; in procession, marrow-bones and cleavers chiming; great scuffling to get on; Mob hollowing, and, Artful bowing to the ladies.

MOB, all.

Artful for ever. Artful for ever. Huzza, huzza.

[Procession goes off. Scene shuts all in.]

SCENE VII.

A Room in WEALTHY'S House.

Enter WEALTHY, at one door, Mrs. WEALTHY and MARIA at the opposite.

Mrs. W.

You need not tell us, you need not tell us; ill news flies apace; we've heard it all.

Mr.

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Mr. W.

To be so widely thrown out!—I never was more out in my calculations in my life.

Mrs. W.

Some of 'em surely must have turned tail, or, Artful could never have carried it two to one.

Mr. W.

Trueman was the means of his succeeding; had he opposed 'em, he'd have thrown 'em both.

MARIA.

Just as I said, mamma.

Mrs. W.

Said,—you fool?—I hav'n't patience... Where's Sir Harry?

Mr. W.

There, I suppose.—I left him among 'em.—We made a pretty appearance too—but—Fortune was perverse!

Enter BETTY.

BETTY.

Here's a man desires to see you, Sir, he's brought a letter.

Mrs. W.

Bid him come in.

[Exit Betty.]

Mr. W.

Who can this be from?—

Re-enter BETTY, and TRUEMAN in disguise.

[Trueman gives Wealthy the letter, Wealthy reads.]

MARIA, *aside.*

What could possess Mr. Trueman to come here at this unseasonable time!

WEALTHY,

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WEALTHY, *giving Mrs. WEALTHY the letter.*

It's from Sir Harry,—there,—he's ruined, and charges me with his undoing; he says, he was obliged to borrow a large sum on account of this election, that he depended on success, and thought to have repaid it, with my daughter's fortune; that he has been betrayed by Quirk and Crafty, that bonds he's given, are put in execution against him, that he has not a farthing left, has therefore gone out of the way, and says nothing can retrieve him but an alliance with my family—a mighty pretty scoundrel!—This, wife, is *your* doing.—

Mrs. W.

My doing, Mr. Wealthy? You know as how we thought he was a man of fortune, or, I never should have consented to his marrying my daughter.

MARIA.

'Tis well, pappa, 'tis no worse; I am delivered from a bad husband, and you freed from a wicked villain.

Mr. W.

I question whether the scoundrel's a *Baronet*.

TRUEM.

If report speaks true, he's all that's bad. Many an honest man in town will be a loser by him; the publican's bills, I fear, will come short of payment.—

BETTY *to* MARIA.

'Tis an ill wind that blows no body good.

Mr. W.

All the praises of the day, have been in favour of that Trueman; had I stirred as much for him,
as

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as I've done for t'other, we should not have set down under this disgrace.

Mrs. W.

You may do that next time, for your daughter's determined to have him, and I'm resolved my son-in-law shall be in parliament.

MARIA.

Indeed, pappa, Mr. Trueman is possessed of such good qualities as do honour to the gentleman; tho' he is not so rich as some, you are sensible a fortune with us is not so great an object of attention, as honour and honesty.

Mr. W.

All that without book, huzzy?—

MARIA.

Besides, Sir, my future happiness is wrapt up in *him*, and, I have always had reason to believe you wish for nothing more, than to see your only child settled *happily* in the world.

Mrs. W.

I have given *my* consent to the match, ever since I heard of Artful's being returned; and would have *you* do so too; — [*aside*] besides I would do it purely to be revenged of *Simple*—
drawing us with his ruin!—a paltry fellow!—

Mr. W.

Well, I'll hear what he has to say, one of these days.

TRUEM. *throwing off his disguise.*

Then, let that day be now.—See, Sir, before you, that Trueman you have been pleased to think so favourably of, and suffer him to say, that if he could obtain your consent [*addressing himself to both.*]

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both] to marry miss Maria, the daily study of his life, should be to make her happy, and repay your kindness with filial gratitude.

WEALTHY, *astonished*.

How's all this?—

TRUEM.

Meeting with the man appointed to deliver that letter, and desiring to see the object of my love, I procured this upper habit at the expence of a crown, promising to deliver it for him.—He is waiting at the next public house for an answer.

Mr. W. *angrily*.

We'll send him an answer, presently.

Mr. W.

That man must be an unaccountable being, that does not respect one, of whom the whole country speaks so well. Let us then repair a broken alliance, which must have been dreadful in its consequences, by that of one, which bodes a deal of good. Take my girl [*joining Trueman's and Maria's hand.*] with all a father's wishes; make her a good husband, and teach the world, that *honesty is the best policy*, and that 'tis more noble to espouse integrity, than to stand forth in the cause of iniquity.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END of ACT II.

F I N I S.